

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claim Status

Claims 1-11 are now pending in the application. Claims 1, 10 and 11 have been amended to even more succinctly define the invention and/or to improve their form. Support for the amendments to the independent claims can be found in the specification at least in the paragraph beginning at line 9 at page 36. Of course, the claims are not intended to be limited in scope to this preferred embodiment.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1 and 3-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Horii et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2005/0041081). Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Uchida (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0030692) in view of Horii et al.

Response to Rejections

Horii et al. is directed to a method of treating liquids in ink jet recording using two printing liquids, with the second printing liquid being capable of causing coagulation when mixed with the first printing liquid. The mixture includes a coagulation-thickening preventing agent which prevents coagulation. As discussed previously, Horii et al. does not disclose or

suggest a coagulation inhibitor inhibiting coagulation of the colorant by preventing contact among particles of the colorant due to an effect of steric hindrance, as is recited in the independent claims. The Office Action suggests that Horii et al. “teaches the same chemical composition and the same apparatus” and, accordingly, “inherently it will perform the same function. Therefore, obviously it performs the steric hindrance effect among the particles.” Applicants respectfully disagree. Nevertheless, to even further distinguish the claimed invention from Horii et al., the claims have been amended to recite that the coagulation inhibitor includes a nonionic surfactant with five or more ethylene oxide groups. Horii et al. describes a chemical composition acting as a coagulation inhibiting liquid that is a chelating agent. See paragraphs [0172] to [0175]. The specific nonionic surfactant recited in the independent claims is not disclosed or suggested by Horii et al..

From the foregoing, it is clear that the present invention as recited in the independent claims differs in composition from the liquids used in Horii et al.. Moreover, the present invention differs from Horii et al. in effect. In Horii et al., the chelating agent masks a particular metal so that a coagulation of the colorant is inhibited. Applicants submit that the chelating agent is dependent on a pH level of the liquid, whereas a nonionic surfactant with five more ethylene oxide groups has an effect of steric hindrance and is not dependent on pH level.

Thus, Horii et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Uchida describes an ink jet recording apparatus that includes a platen absorber. Uchida does not disclose or suggest any coagulation inhibiting liquid having an effect of steric hindrance. Accordingly, Uchida fails to remedy the deficiencies of Horii et al. noted above with respect to the independent claims.

Thus, the independent claims are patentable over the citations of record.

Dependent Claims

Claims 2-8 and 11 are either directly or indirectly dependent from the independent claims and are allowable by virtue of their dependency and in their own right for further defining the invention.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable over the art of record, and that the application is in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the application are earnestly solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Mark A. Williamson/

Mark A. Williamson
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 33,628

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
1290 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10104-3800
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200

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